



THE CONFEDERATED SALISH AND KOOTENAI TRIBES  
OF THE FLATHEAD NATION

P.O. BOX 278  
Pablo, Montana 59855  
(406) 275-2700  
FAX (406) 275-2806  
www.cskt.org



A People of Vision

A Confederation of the Salish,  
Pend d' Oreille  
and Kootenai Tribes

State Administration Committee  
Honorable Jeff Essmann, Chair  
Honorable Bill Harris, Vice Chair  
Honorable Casey Schreiner, Vice Chair  
64<sup>th</sup> Montana Legislature  
Capitol Building – Helena, MT

TRIBAL COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Ronald Trahan - Chairman  
Carole Lankford - Vice Chair  
James V. Matt - Secretary  
Len Twoteeth - Treasurer  
Vernon S. Finley  
Shelly R. Fyant  
Leonard W. Gray  
Lloyd D. Irvine  
Terry L. Pitts  
Patty Stevens

**RE: HB 331 – Remove the term “half breed” from signage and geological features in Montana;**  
**Sponsor: Rep. Schwaderer**

Chairman Essmann and Committee Members:

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (“CSKT”) support HB 331 as it provides for the removal of disparaging terminology from State of Montana owned property. Our Tribes would like to personally thank the sponsor of the bill, Rep. Schwaderer, as this legislation represents one more step toward equality.

The term “breed or half breed” is typically used in a derogatory offensive manner; minimizing the value of anyone of American Indian heritage. For example, many western films utilized the term as an insult (see *The Half-breed*, *Keoma* and *Chato's Land*). The CSKT welcomes the removal of any and all offensive terminology from State property, which disparages any individual or group of individuals.

We believe this bill is long overdue in the State of Montana as there are seven great Tribal Nations with abundant cultural diversity and rich history. The CSKT Tribes gladly offer our advice and technical assistance to any State Agency to replace offensive and outdated terminology with culturally relevant place names that are respectful and meaningful.

We urge that this Committee recognize this small step towards equality and support this legislation with a yes vote. Again, we would like to thank the sponsor for this important acknowledgement.

Respectfully submitted,

Vernon Finley, Chairman  
Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

HB 331  
Poncha  
(6)